

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 772

Introduced by Assembly Member Chan

February 18, 2005

An act to relating to health care coverage.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 772, as introduced, Chan. California for Healthy Kids Program.

Existing law establishes programs to provide health care benefits to children, including the Healthy Families Program and the Medi-Cal program.

This bill would express the Legislature's findings concerning the importance of providing health care coverage to all children in the state and its intent to establish the California for Healthy Kids Program to provide children from birth to 21 years of age access to affordable health care coverage.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: no.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. (a) The Legislature finds and declares the
- 2 following:
- 3 (1) Investing in comprehensive health care coverage for
- 4 children is cost-effective, because it promotes access to early,
- 5 less costly, preventive care and treatment.
- 6 (2) Health care coverage helps children reach their potential in
- 7 school. Children with this coverage experience a 25 percent
- 8 improvement in health, and a 68 percent improvement in "paying
- 9 attention in class" and "keeping up with school activities."

1 Having health care coverage is also an important predictor of
2 access to care.

3 (3) Although approximately nine of every 10 children in
4 California have health care coverage, according to data in 2003
5 from the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, nearly
6 800,000 children in the state are currently without this coverage.

7 (4) The goal of providing all children in California with health
8 care coverage is achievable, and can be reached through modest
9 steps. Employer-based health care coverage, which now covers
10 50 percent of children in California, and public programs, which
11 now cover 30 percent of children in this state, serve as strong
12 building blocks on which to provide coverage for all children in
13 the state. In addition, local children's health initiatives across the
14 state are implementing programs to achieve this objective. Local
15 coalitions in 10 counties have implemented public-private
16 initiatives to ensure affordable coverage for all children in their
17 communities, and 17 other counties are in the planning stages for
18 these programs.

19 (b) It is the intent of the Legislature to create the California for
20 Healthy Kids program, with the following objectives:

21 (1) Create a strong private-public initiative in which all
22 children living in California from birth to 21 years of age will
23 have access to affordable health care coverage.

24 (2) Build upon the successful aspects of California's publicly
25 funded state health care programs and reform their unsuccessful
26 aspects. This process includes modernizing and simplifying the
27 process of enrolling children in coverage and maintaining their
28 enrollment.

29 (3) Create a statewide health care coverage system that uses
30 the lessons and successes of local children's health initiatives.

31 (4) Promote voluntary opportunities to strengthen employer
32 participation in providing health care coverage for an employee's
33 dependents.

34 (5) Develop sustainable financing that supports the system
35 over the long term, including maximizing federal funding.

36 (6) Promote opportunities for children to access services under
37 their health care coverage.

38 (7) Ensure a strong safety net as a vital component of access to
39 care.

40 (8) Do no harm as these reforms are implemented.

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